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INDIANA UNIVERSITY STARTER FOR MUSEUM

THE STEVENS COLLECTION

For the purpose of starting a museum of Indiana History at Indiana University, Warder W. Stevens recently gave to the University a valuable and extensive collection of materials illustrating pioneer life in the State.

The collection includes relics from nearly all fields of pioneer activity. There is a fully equipped conestoga wagon, one of the real old Prairie Schooners; there are several plows, including the wooden, wooden moldboard, jumping shovel, home-made double shovel, and others, with the single and double-trees to match; there are cradles, sickles, a thresher, a cotton gin, a hominy mill, a corncracker, a feed cutter, and many other relics to illustrate this phase of life; there are spider skillets, ovens for baking corn pones, pewter and wooden table ware, a crane for cooking in the fireplace, and a full assortment of what the old sales bills would call "household and kitchen furniture too numerous to mention"; there is a loom, spinning wheels, reels, winding blades and some things along this line for which I have no names at present; there are flintlock, percussion caps, rifled and smooth-bore guns with an assortment of bowie knives, pistols and revolvers.

The following brief article written by the donor as he was waiting for a train will convey some idea of the collection and the sentiment that makes such things dear to the sons and daughters of the pioneers.—Ed.

All of us, in a greater or less degree, find pleasure in comparing the present with the past in order that we may note the rapid strides that have been made along all industrial and educational lines since the days of our forefathers. We look back over a brief life's space and are wrapt in wonderment as we contemplate the rapid developments and achievements of a hustling, bustling people along every walk of life. We listen to the stories of miraculous accomplishments, but we fail to catch onto the spirit of the age fully, until an object lesson is placed before our eyes, which enables us, at a glance, to fully realize that we stand in the midst of a rapidly developing age with possibilities beyond all power of conception. For example, we can scarcely realize that only a few years since there was no telephone, or that no farther back than 1898 there was but one concern on the continent that had begun the manufacture of the automobile. What an object lesson in rapid development it would be to place that first horseless carriage alongside one of the most complete models of the present day!

I am asked to give a brief account of the collection of relics recently turned over to Indiana University as a nucleus that is bound to grow until it will at no distant day become a very interesting and instructive feature of this great seat of learning in Indiana. The collector, like the specialist along all progressive lines, is probably born, not made. Early in life most all of us show some peculiar bent of mind that has much to do in shaping our destiny of life's **work.** As I now look back over a period of more than three score years it is plain to be seen that as a boy I had a *penchant* for the collection of old "traps" and but for this love of preserving relics of various kinds many of the interesting things this little collection contains would have been missing, as it would now be impossible to duplicate them, except by model or imitation.

The several thousand pieces of the prehistoric section were almost all picked up in Southern Indiana, mostly in Washington county. Whenever there was an idle day, or a day off from regular duty or occupation, it was a great pleasure to roam the hills and valleys in search of the old-time Indian village or camping ground, or in digging into the monument of the mound builders, in search of those mute specimens of handicraft that told of a people that in other years or ages existed and flourished in our land. In many ways it is left for the imagination to picture out where these people originally came from, how they employed their time and existed or what was the cause of their fading away from the earth's surface. Not infrequently a whole bunch of stone hoes, spear points, axes, tomahawks or arrows would be unearthed near a spot where burned stones, flint chips and a nearby spring showed that some time in the remote past there existed a village of Red Men or the mound builder. The scattered finds were pieces lost by the hunter in the underbrush while in pursuit of game. As a matter of course all these finds are becoming scarce as the years go by and the country is being cleaned up and put under cultivation. The most valuable finds were always made along the large rivers and streams where not only hunting was best, but fishing could be indulged in with greatest success. Bone fish hooks are still to be found in some places along the Ohio river where the larger Indian villages were located.

As one looks at the wooden mould board plow it hardly seems possible that they could ever have been used successfully by the husbandman in breaking up new lands, full of grubs and roots. But they were a decided improvement over the forked stick, its immediate predecessor. The "bar share" came first in the order of in-

vention, it being the flat share, with wooden mould-board attachment, fastened to the plow stock or frame with wooden pins, bolts for such purpose not having as yet come into general use. The pair of wooden double-trees, now over a century old, show to what straights the farmer of that day was compelled to resort in order to get afield with team and plow to cultivate the land. Almost every farmer was then a sort of Jack-at-all-trades. He manufactured his own harness from leather of his own tanning, and such farm implements as were used were home products. No such thing as a plow or wagon factory was to be found anywhere in the country, especially in the newly settled portions. Hoes, spading forks, nails, knives and forks, spoons and the like were manufactured by the blacksmith, who burned the charcoal that was used in the forge of the shop.

But to go back to the plows, the "Carey" was successor to the bar-share pattern. It was made with an upright iron projection extending above the flat bar, finished with a smaller wooden mould-board. This plow came into use in Indiana about 1815. The earliest settlers, about 1800, located in the southern tier of counties, were content with the bar share. The "Daniel Webster" plow came into use about 1835, the share and mould board being made of unwrought and cast iron. In a remodeled form it was known as the "Peacock" plow, a man by that name back East, probably in Pennsylvania, having first made and put it upon the market. The mould-board was cast in the furnaces up in Pennsylvania and shipped down the Ohio on rafts or flat boats to destination, where they were fitted to plow stocks by the wagon-wright or blacksmith, the latter not infrequently being able to work in both iron and wood successfully. About the year 1850 the "Rounder" came into use, a plow that had share and mould all in one solid piece, and made of steel, the first plow made that would scour in light, loose soils. They were used in cultivating corn, running the bar side next to the row till last cultivating when the earth was thrown up against the corn. The jumping shovel was its successor in corn cultivation, as well as in breaking up new land. The double shovel cultivator with wooden frame was first made and used along in the 50's.

Spinning wheels, large and small, were to be found in every well-furnished home, home-made in most instances, and kept buzzing by the housewife in manufacture of thread and yarn to be used in making the homespun linen, jeans and flannels that was worked up into wearing apparel for the entire family.

The very first settlers were content with cabins with puncheon

floors and doors, but a little later on the whipsaw was introduced to make such boards as were necessary in home building. In this collection is a saw brought into Washington county about 1807 and used for a number of years. A poplar log, the yellow, soft variety, was hewn square, and then mounted upon some sort of trestle about seven feet above the ground. On top it was lined off with blue dye or poke-berry juice, the lines being spaced according to the thickness of lumber or joists desired. One sawyer was located on top of the log and another underneath, and with every downward stroke of the saw a cut into the timber was made. Two good sawyers would thus cut about two hundred feet per day. The last time the saw in this collection was used was on exhibition display at a Granger picnic near Salem in 1876, when Bluejeans Williams was a candidate for Governor, who was top sawyer, and a man named Morris pulled at the handle underneath. What a contrast there is between this saw, considered a great invention a century ago, and the immense sawmill plants in the lumber camps of the country where lumber by the thousands of feet are turned out every hour of the day.

The old-time trundle bed, upon which John Hay, the celebrated author and statesman, slept during his boyhood days in Salem, is a relic every Hoosier should feel proud of. The dog-wood glut or wedge, unquestionably made by Lincoln's hands during his youthful days in Southern Indiana, when he earned his name as the "Rail Splitter" President, is one of the interesting pieces of this collection.

The various items in this collection are carded and briefly described, and when all are properly arranged in cases will no doubt be interesting to students of the University who care to compare the present with the past. And it is to be hoped that this display may induce others who have old-time relics or heirlooms of an interesting nature to deposit same with the University, and that in time a very interesting historical museum may be collected.

WARDER W. STEVENS.